



FEMA

Recovery News

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FEMA INSPECTORS NOW ASSESSING STORM DAMAGE IN SEVEN MASSACHUSETTS COUNTIES

ANDOVER, MA – More than 130 disaster housing inspectors under contract by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are currently performing inspections for registered homeowners, renters and business owners in seven counties whose homes or businesses were damaged by the severe flooding that began on March 12.

Recovery officials said that more than 9,000 damage inspection requests have been received to date. Nearly 50 percent of the requests, or 4,269, have been completed and returned to FEMA. Most housing inspections are completed within four days after an inspection is assigned.

Registration is the First Step

Residents of declared counties must first register with FEMA if they are seeking assistance. This can be done online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov, or by calling **toll-free 800-621-3362 (FEMA)**, or (TTY) 800-462-7585 for those with a speech or hearing impairment.

Representatives are available 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. local time, seven days a week. Multilingual assistance is available. Once registered, applicants can easily stay in touch with FEMA to track their status.

Eligible applicants may receive:

- Federal disaster-assistance grants from FEMA and/or
- Low-interest home and business disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration.
- Payments to individuals made to cover uninsured or underinsured disaster-related expenses. Examples of these are emergency home repairs, temporary housing or assistance toward the replacement of a destroyed home, and other serious unmet disaster-related expenses.

- Information about various disaster-assistance programs can be found online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov.

Damage inspections are critical to the FEMA application process because they document damage. Inspectors do not determine whether an applicant is eligible or provide estimates on damages.

Understanding the Inspection Process

- Damage inspection is free.
- A FEMA inspector will contact an applicant by phone to schedule an appointment.
- It is critical to update FEMA with current contact information, including a phone number and accurate directions to the damaged property. An applicant who is unable to return for the mandatory damage inspection may authorize an adult agent to be present.
- A street address is required since post office boxes do not show locations.
- An inspector will try three times to schedule a damage inspection appointment. Delays may occur if you cannot be reached.
- Owners and renters must show proof of occupancy such as a utility bill or landlord statement.
- Owners must also show proof of ownership.
- Each inspection generally takes 30 to 40 minutes.

Be Alert for Disaster Fraud

FEMA inspectors carry official photo identification with their name and the words “**Under contract to FEMA**” printed on it. Residents should ask for this photo identification before allowing an inspector inside their home.

Official inspectors will never ask for money or use a vehicle bearing a FEMA logo. If money is requested for an inspection or an applicant feels someone is misrepresenting themselves as a FEMA inspector, this should be reported to local police.

Massachusetts counties declared as major disaster areas March 29 are: Bristol, Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk and Worcester counties.

FEMA’s mission is to support our citizens and first responders and to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

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